

CLAIMS

We claim:

1. A method of correlating a purchaser of an electronically-purchased item ("EPI")  
with the EPI, said EPI to be subsequently received by said purchaser, comprising:

a purchasing step, wherein purchaser-related financial and digital certificate  
information is transferred to a seller of said EPI and verification-related digital certificate  
information is transferred to said purchaser; and

a verification step, wherein said purchaser and said EPI are correlated by requiring  
said purchaser to provide said verification-related digital certificate information before  
receiving said EPI and by electronically comparing said verification-related digital  
certificate information with said EPI.

2. The method as set forth in claim 1, wherein said purchasing step includes at least  
the steps of:

creating an electronically-readable indicia corresponding to said verification-related  
digital certificate information; and

associating said electronically-readable indicia with said EPI.

3. The method as set forth in claim 2, wherein said verification step comprises:

2 electronically reading said verification-related digital certificate information from  
3 said electronically-readable indicia into a verification system prior to receiving said EPI;  
4 and

5 comparing said read verification-related digital certificate information with 112  
6 verification-related digital certificate information provided by a person attempting to  
receive the EPI.

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7 4. The method as set forth in claim 3, wherein the EPI is authorized to be released  
8 to said person attempting to receive the EPI only after the EPI is confirmed to have ?  
9 associated therewith verification-related digital certificate information corresponding to the  
10 verification-related digital certificate information provided by said receiving party.

11 5. The method as set forth in claim 4, wherein said verification-related digital  
12 certificate information comprises an encrypted data file containing personal data pertaining  
13 to said purchaser.

1 6. The method as set forth in claim 4, wherein said verification-related digital  
2 certificate information comprises a data file containing encrypted data pertaining to said  
3 EPI.

1           7. The method as set forth in claim 4, wherein said digital certificate  
2 information comprises an encrypted data file containing personal data pertaining to said  
3 purchaser and data pertaining to said EPI.

1           8. The method as set forth in claim 4, wherein said purchaser-related digital  
2 certificate information is provided by data stored on a smart card.

1           9. The method as set forth in claim 4, wherein said purchaser-related digital  
2 certificate information is supplied from data stored on a PDA.

1           10. The method as set forth in claim 4, wherein said purchaser-related information  
2 is supplied from data stored on a cellular telephone.

1           11. The method as set forth in claim 2, wherein said electronically-readable indicia  
2 comprises bar coding.

1           12. A method of correlating a purchased item to be picked up by a purchaser with  
2 the purchaser of the item, comprising the steps of:  
3           transferring indicia of verification-related digital certificate information to the  
4 purchased item;

5 requiring said purchaser to present said verification-related digital certificate  
6 information upon picking up said item; and

7 correlating said purchased item with the purchaser of the item by electronically  
8 comparing said verification-related digital certificate information presented by said  
9 purchaser with said indicia.

13. A method of correlating a purchased redeemable ticket (PRD) with the  
2 purchaser of the redeemable ticket, comprising:

3 a purchasing step, wherein purchaser-related financial and digital certificate  
4 information is transferred to a seller of said PRD and verification-related digital certificate  
5 information is transferred to said purchaser; and

6 a verification step, wherein said purchaser and said PRD are correlated by requiring  
7 said purchaser to provide said verification-related digital certificate information before  
8 receiving said PRD and by electronically comparing said verification-related digital  
9 certificate information with said PRD.

1 14. The method as set forth in claim 13, wherein said purchasing step includes  
2 at least the steps of:

3 creating an electronically-readable indicia corresponding to said verification-related  
4 digital certificate information; and

5 associating said electronically-readable indicia with said PRD.

1 15. The method as set forth in claim 14, wherein said verification step comprises:  
2 electronically reading said verification-related digital certificate information from  
3 said electronically-readable indicia into a verification system prior to receiving said PRD;  
4 and

5 comparing said read verification-related digital certificate information with  
6 verification-related digital certificate information provided by a person attempting to  
7 receive the PRD.

8 16. The method as set forth in claim 15, wherein the PRD is authorized to be  
9 released to said person attempting to receive the PRD only after the PRD is confirmed to  
10 have associated therewith verification-related digital certificate information corresponding  
11 to the verification-related digital certificate information provided by said receiving party.

12 17. The method as set forth in claim 16, wherein said verification-related digital  
13 certificate information comprises an encrypted data file containing personal data pertaining  
14 to said purchaser.

1 18. The method as set forth in claim 16, wherein said verification-related digital  
2 certificate information comprises a data file containing encrypted data pertaining to said  
3 PRD.

1 19. The method as set forth in claim 16, wherein said digital certificate  
2 information comprises an encrypted data file containing personal data pertaining to said  
3 purchaser and data pertaining to said PRD.

1 20. The method as set forth in claim 16, wherein said purchaser-related digital  
2 certificate information is provided by data stored on a smart card.

1 21. The method as set forth in claim 16, wherein said purchaser-related digital  
2 certificate information is supplied from data stored on a PDA.

1 22. The method as set forth in claim 16, wherein said purchaser-related information  
2 is supplied from data stored on a cellular telephone.

1 23. The method as set forth in claim 13, wherein said electronically-readable  
2 indicia comprises bar coding.